

13 February 1967

BACKSTOPPER FOR BRIEFINGS

SOVIET BW/CW CAPABILITY

Chemical Warfare

I. Soviet development and testing of chemical warfare agents have been expanding gradually since the nineteen thirties. There are large and sophisticated research and test facilities to support this program.

A. The Soviets are aware of most of the chemical warfare agents known to the West. Their own inventory includes at least one nerve gas agent which may be more toxic than any stockpiled by Western military powers.

1. We have identified more than 20 sites, mainly in the western and central Soviet Union, which we believe to be storage depots for chemical warfare agents.

B. We believe that these stockpiles contain munitions for use by tactical aircraft, missiles, rockets, artillery, and mortars. Soviet troops also have a chemical warfare capability with spray systems, aerosol generators, land mines and grenades.

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BW/CW-1

~~TOP SECRET~~

C. Soviet military leaders assume that the West would use chemical weapons in the event of general war. All elements of the Soviet forces stress defensive chemical warfare training, and Soviet protective equipment for the armed forces is excellent.

Bacteriological Warfare

II. The Soviet Union probably began investigating the concept of biological warfare in the nineteen thirties. References in Soviet scientific literature show a long-standing interest in a variety of diseases which are potential biological warfare agents.

A. There are several sites in the USSR which we suspect are supporting biological warfare research. Testing could also be carried out at some of the chemical warfare research facilities.

B. The Soviet Union has the scientific foundation for a good capability in both the offensive and defensive aspects of biological warfare. The Soviets have probably developed some biological warfare agents, but we have no evidence as to which ones, or the extent of the program.

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BW/CW-2

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